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# BLACK MAGIC

TRUE AMAZING  
ACCOUNTS OF THE  
STRANGEST STORIES  
EVER TOLD!

magazine

I-I HEARD HIM  
SCREAM, SIR! WHEN  
I RUSHED OVER-- ALL I  
COULD FIND OF HIM WAS  
THAT HORRIBLE IMAGE  
IN THE TABLE TOP!

THIS IS THE SECOND  
DISTURBANCE AT THE NEW  
TABLE! HOW DID THAT  
AWFUL THING GET INTO  
THE WOOD SURFACE?  
WHERE IS THE CUSTOMER  
WHO SAT HERE?

READ  
"THE SOUL-  
CATCHER!"

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No. 1

# **BLACK MAGIC** 3'6

ALBUM

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No one can set a trap like the devil. This one was most effective--because it looked so harmless.

# The SOUL CATCHER!



"NO ONE BUT PAUL RAYFIELD COULD HAVE MADE ME, JOE BARRET LEAVE THE AIR CONDITIONED ROOM OF MY NEW YORK APARTMENT FOR A FOUL SMELLING PIER WHOSE TIMBERS LAY DRY AND PARCHED IN THE BLISTERING HEAT OF A MID-SUMMER SUN!"

"WELCOME HOME, PAUL! YOU'VE BEEN GONE SO LONG I THOUGHT YOU WERE NEVER COMING BACK!"

"YOU MEN, CAREFUL WITH THAT CRATE! SEE THAT IT'S DELIVERED TO MY HOME IMMEDIATELY!"

"WHEN PAUL RETURNED TO NEW YORK HE ALWAYS BROUGHT BACK A HOST OF STRANGE OBJECTS! YOU SEE, HE WAS A STUDENT OF THE OCCULT AND HIS COLLECTION OF WIERD AND UNUSUAL INSTRUMENTS OF WITCHCRAFT AND SORCERY WAS SO COMPLETE IT COULD NEVER BE DUPLICATED BY ANYONE!"

"WELL, PAUL, WHAT HAVE YOU BROUGHT BACK THIS TIME? IS IT A PAGAN IDOL OR SOME DEMON INFESTED OLD SHROUD?"

"DON'T KID ME, JOE! I HAVE SOMETHING EVEN A HARD-HEADED PRACTICAL TEACHER OF PHYSICS LIKE YOU WILL GAPE AT! DRIVE ME HOME, I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT IT!"



PAUL SAT BESIDE ME AS I DROVE UP BROADWAY! HE PROMISED TO REVEAL HIS SECRET WHEN WE REACHED HIS HOME! NOTHING COULD PERSUADE HIM TO GIVE ME A HINT AND THE NEXT FORTY MINUTES WERE SPENT IN SMALL TALK UNTIL I PULLED UP AT HIS WESTCHESTER ADDRESS!

JOE, NO DOUBT YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH THE LEGENDS OF WOOD SPIRITS! THERE ARE EVEN PEOPLE TODAY WHO BELIEVE THESE CREATURES EXIST!

I KNOW, OUR MENTAL INSTITUTIONS ARE FULL OF THEM!

DON'T LAUGH, THEY DO EXIST! I'VE BROUGHT ONE BACK WITH ME! IT BELONGED TO A WITCH DOCTOR DEEP IN THE JUNGLES OF CEYLON! HE KNEW IT FOR WHAT IT WAS! NOT A GAY MYTHOLOGICAL WOOD NYMPH THAT POETS GLORIFY, BUT AN EVIL MALIGNANT ENTITY OF THE DEVIL'S OWN CREATION!

DON'T BE RIDICULOUS, PAUL! WHAT IS THIS THING, AN OLD LOG WITH THE DEVIL HIDING IN ITS HOLLOW CORE?

PERHAPS IT IS THE DEVIL, BUT IT'S NOT A LOG HE'S IN! IT'S A TABLE, BEAUTIFULLY FASHIONED BY SOME UNKNOWN JUNGLE CRAFTSMAN MANY CENTURIES AGO! WAIT TILL YOU SEE IT!

WE WAITED PATIENTLY FOR THE CRATE TO ARRIVE.. BUT FATE HAD OTHER PLANS FOR ITS HELLISH CONTENTS!

HEY, CHARLIE, HURRY UP! GET THAT CRATE INTO NICKY'S PLACE! THEY'RE WAITING FOR IT!

OKAY, MURPHY! NOW WHICH CRATE DOES NICKY GET? OH, YEAH, IT'S THIS ONE!



LUNKHEADS! DOES THIS LOOK LIKE A CHROME TABLE? WHY DIDN'T YOU HAVE THAT STUPID TRUCK-MAN WAIT UNTIL YOU UNCRATED THIS ANTIQUE! WHAT SHALL WE USE TO REPLACE NUMBER THIRTEEN NOW?

MISTAKES HAPPEN! PUT A TABLECLOTH OVER IT AND NO ONE WILL NOTICE! IT WILL DO FOR TONIGHT! TOMORROW YOU CAN CALL THE TRUCKER AND STRAIGHTEN IT OUT!

I..IM SORRY, NICKY. IT'S ALL MY FAULT!

AN HOUR LATER AS THE SUPPER CROWD BEGAN TO ARRIVE, EVERYONE HURRIED TO HIS APPOINTED STATION.. AND TABLE NUMBER THIRTEEN WAS FORGOTTEN, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT!

REMEMBER OUR LITTLE AGREEMENT, TONY! I'VE PLACED OUR BEST TIPPERS AT YOUR TABLES TONIGHT! WE BOTH SHOULD DO VERY WELL, EH?

YOU CALL THEM SPENDERS! THE LAST THREE COUPLES THAT OCCUPIED TABLE THIRTEEN DRANK LIKE FISH, MADE LOTS OF NOISE, BUT NO TIPS! ONLY CIGAR BURNS IN THE TABLE CLOTH AS BIG AS SILVER DOLLARS! I THINK THAT ANTIQUE IS JINXED!



"MEANWHILE MURPHY, OBLIVIOUS TO THE TRAGIC ERROR HE HAD MADE INNOCENTLY DELIVERED THE OTHER CRATE TO ITS WESTCHESTER PLACE."



"IT TOOK THE DRIVER A FEW MOMENTS TO OPEN THE CRATE! WHEN PAUL GOT HIS FIRST GLIMPSE AT ITS CONTENTS HIS FEATURES TURNED LIVID WITH RAGE!"



"LET'S SEE NOW! OH YEAH! MY HELPER AND I STOPPED BY NICKY'S HIDEAWAY TO DELIVER A CRATE ABOUT THE SAME SIZE!"

CHARLIE PROBABLY TOOK THE WRONG ONE! I'LL GET IT BACK FOR YOU!



"PAUL DIDN'T WAIT FOR ANY FURTHER EXPLANATIONS...FRANTICALLY GRABBING ME BY THE ARM HE HUSTLED ME TO THE CAR!"

WE HAVE TO GET THERE BEFORE SOMETHING DREADFUL HAPPENS! YOU CAN'T COMPREHEND THE TERRIBLE POWER THAT LURKS BENEATH THE VENEERED SURFACE OF THAT TABLE!



"BUT BACK AT NICKY'S HIDEAWAY, THINGS WERE BEGINNING TO HAPPEN!"

NO TIPS AT TABLE THIRTEEN YET? WELL, I'VE JUST PLACED THE SENATOR AND HIS NEW, AH, SECRETARY AT TABLE THIRTEEN! HE'S A GOOD TIPPER... NEVER LESS THAN FIVE DOLLARS! WATCH ME BREAK YOUR JINX!

GO AHEAD, BUT REMEMBER, YOUR CUT IS ONLY TWENTY PERCENT OF THE TIP!



EVERYTHING WAS JUST FINE, MARIO! OH, YES, THE CHECK!



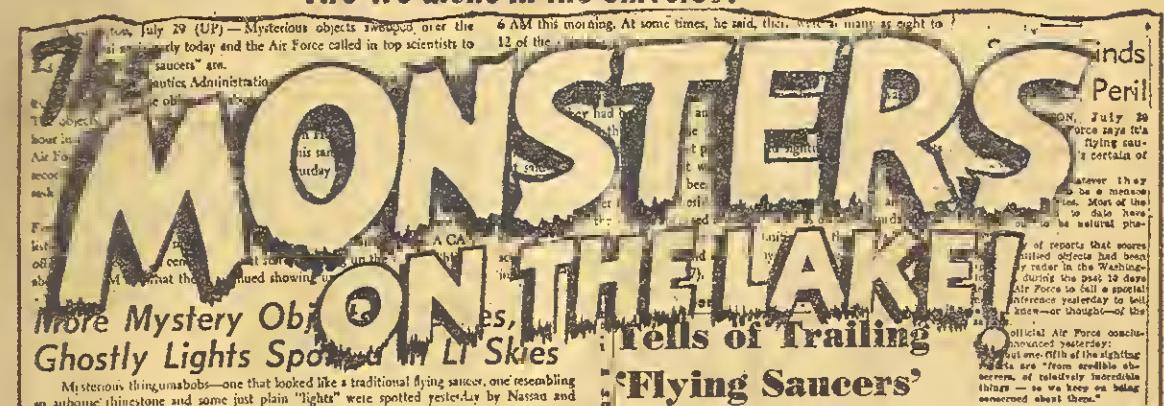
"THE SENATOR PLACED SEVERAL LARGE SILVER COINS ON THE TABLE AND HE AND THE YOUNG LADY DEPARTED."



"TEN MINUTES LATER PAUL AND I ENTERED THE DIMLY LIT NOISY INTERIOR OF NICKY'S HIDEAWAY!"



If you doubt this story, look up at the night sky and ask yourself this question: Among all those billions of stars is our little planet the only one to support life? Are we alone in the universe?



## More Mystery Obj. Ghostly Lights Spotted in Lt. Skies

Mysterious things unbobs—one that looked like a traditional flying saucer, one resembling an ambulance, limestone and some just plain "lights" were spotted yesterday by Nasau and Suffolk residents.

The heavily shadowed was identified as a meteor. The disc, he said, was obviously

identifying them by their popular name "flying saucers."

night by a meteor. Video

## Tells of Trailing 'Flying Saucers'

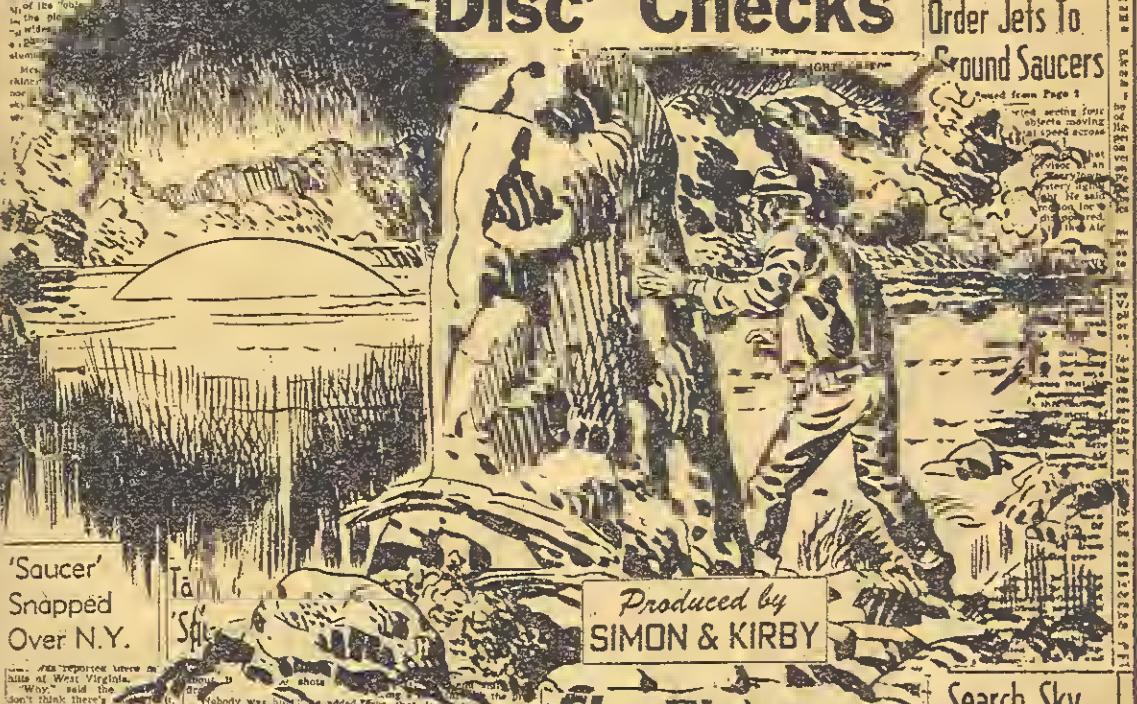
By JAMES M. RITCHETT  
Radar Specialist, Washington Air Route Traffic Control Center

## Coast Guard Photographs 'Saucers'

Washington (AP)—Coast Guard Headquarters today made public a photograph of "unidentified aerial phenomena" taken by a 21-year-old Coast

The photo clearly shows four round objects. Each is about 10 feet in diameter. One is white, the others are grey. The two white ones are identical and appear to be moving in the same direction. The two grey ones are also identical and appear to be moving in the same direction. The two white ones are also identical and appear to be moving in the same direction. The two grey ones are also identical and appear to be moving in the same direction.

## AF Continues 'Disc' Checks



'Saucer'  
Snapped  
Over N.Y.

Produced by  
SIMON & KIRBY

## AF Calls on Science As 'Ghosts' Fly Again

Washington, July 29 (UPI)—The Air Force called in top scientists today to find out what "flying saucers" really are as mysterious objects again swooped over the Capital.

## Sky Phantoms— AF Says It's the Scientists Explain Views

Search Sky  
As 'Saucers'  
Blot Radar

WASHINGTON, July 29

I WISH WITH ALL MY HEART THAT I'D BEEN A THOUSAND MILES AWAY FROM WHAT HAPPENED THAT DREADFUL NIGHT ON LAKE CLAIRE! THEN I'D HAVE BEEN ONE OF THE MILLIONS WHO WERE UNAWARE OF IT! THEN I'D HAVE BEEN SAVED THE EMBARRASSING AND DIFFICULT TASK OF SAYING TO THESE SKEPTICAL MILLIONS: I SAW A FLYING SAUCER... CLOSE UP... FROM THE INSIDE!



ONLY I'M NOT! THERE ARE BURNS ON MY BODY... MY MEMORY IS PERMANENTLY SCARRED! AND THE DEVILISH PRODDING OF MY CONSCIENCE HAS FINALLY DRIVEN ME, AGAINST MY BETTER JUDGEMENT... TO RISK PUBLIC RIDICULE WITH THIS STORY...



IT WAS FANTASTIC FROM ITS VERY START, BECAUSE IT WAS MOMENTOUS IN NATURE! AND IT SHOULD HAVE OCCURRED IN A LOCALITY WHERE MORE COMPETENT AUTHORITY THAN THE BACKWOODS RESIDENTS OF CLEMENTS COUNTY WAS AVAILABLE! I CAN RECALL THE FIRST STIRRINGS OF IT... IN THE GENERAL STORE.

THAT'S ALL OF IT, GUS... JUST PUT IT ON THE BILL...

IF IT'S ALL THE SAME TO YOU, HARRY STONE, I'D RATHER HAVE THE CASH!



GUESS, I'VE BEEN AWAY TOO LONG, GUS! I SHOULD HAVE REMEMBERED YOUR POLICY! HOW'S BUSINESS?

ON THAT BASIS, I DO WELL ENOUGH! OF COURSE, A MAN CAN'T HOPE TO MAKE BIG CITY PROFITS IN A TOWN OF THIS SIZE!



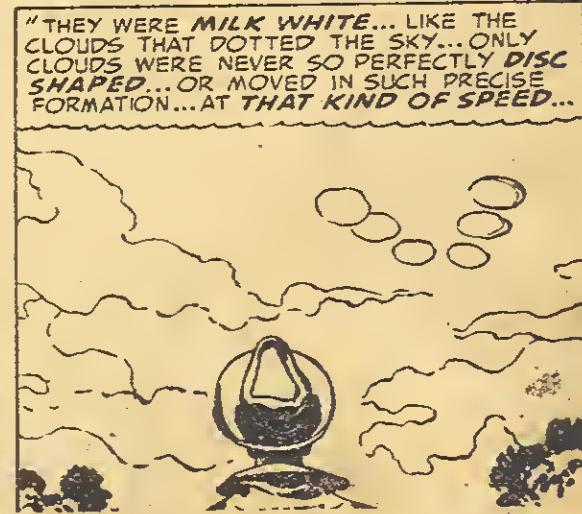
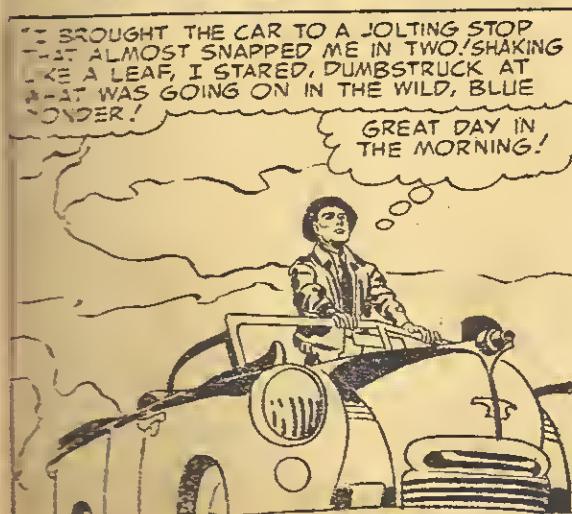
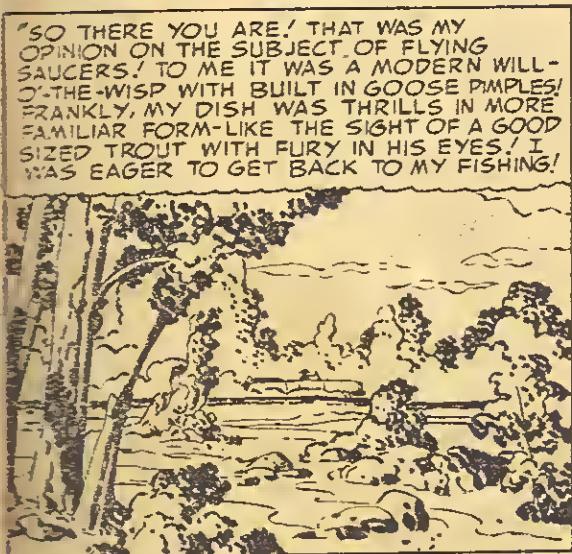
WELL, THIS PLACE CAN'T BE COMPLETELY DEAD... NOT WHEN THE LOCALS STILL FIND TOPICS FOR SUCH HEATED CONVERSATION!

OH, YOU MEAN JULE MORRISON AND HIS FLYING SAUCERS! THE OLD FOOL CLAIMS A... A FLIGHT OF THEM LIT OVER HIS TOBACCO PATCH LAST NIGHT!

I WONDER WHY YOU NEVER TRIED THE CITY, GUS? WITH YOUR YEN FOR A DOLLAR, YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN RICH BY THIS TIME!

I WOULDN'T HAVE BECOME A REPORTER LIKE YOU, THAT'S FOR SURE! AND, I'D NEVER HAVE COME BACK HERE... NOT EVEN FOR FISHING!





"IN THE SPAN OF ONE FULL SECOND, I'D WATCHED THEM COVER THE DISTANCE AND EXECUTE THE MANEUVERS THAT NO AIRCRAFT I'D EVER SEEN COULD DUPLICATE! WHEN THE SECOND WAS GONE — SO WERE THE DISCS!"



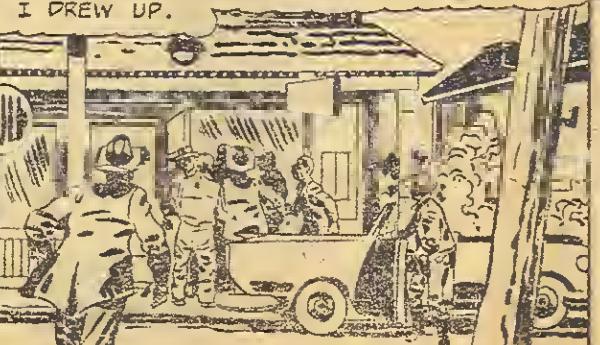
"WELL, THERE'S NO USE IN RAISING A LOT OF BLOOD PRESSURE ABOUT IT. THIS IS AN AGE OF 'BUCK ROGERS' GADGETS! THEY'LL TAKE THESE THINGS OUT OF THE HUSH-HUSH STAGE ANY DAY NOW!"

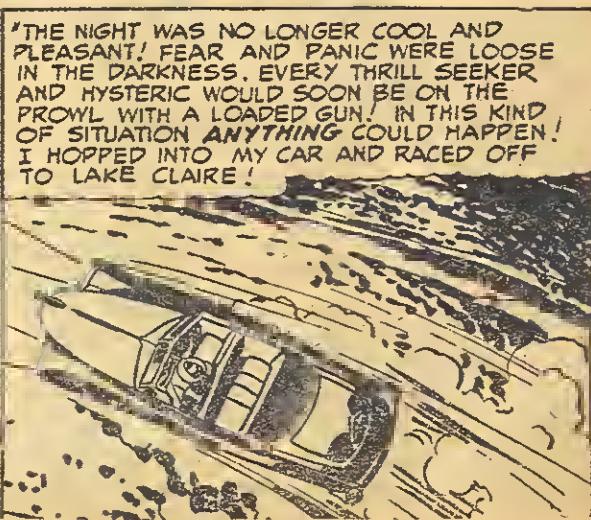
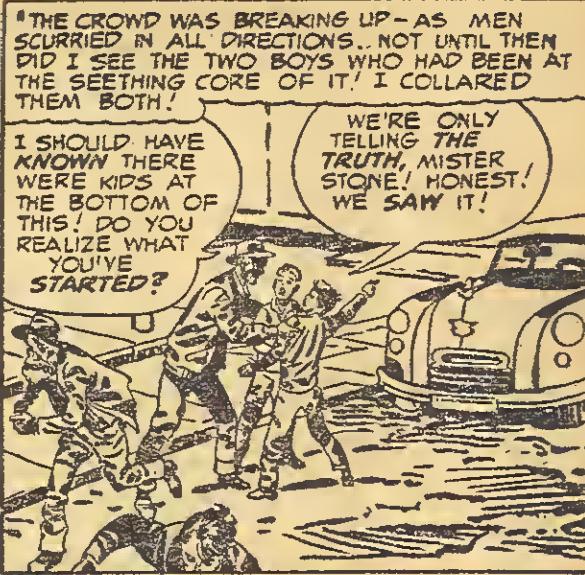


"HAD I ALLOWED THAT FLIPPANT THOUGHT TO DEVELOP INTO A SOLID HUNCH, I BELIEVE I MAY HAVE FORESTALLED THE HORROR THAT WAS TO FOLLOW — AND GAINED REKNOWN WITH WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE GREATEST NEWS BEAT OF ALL TIME. INSTEAD I FISHED — AND ATE — AND PREPARED FOR BED — THINKING ONLY OF THE FEW DAYS LEFT TO MY VACATION."



"I MADE PRETTY GOOD TIME ON THOSE DARK ROADS. THE TOWN SEEMED STRANGELY ALIVE FOR THAT EARLY HOUR.. IN FRONT OF THE GENERAL STORE WAS A SMALL GROUP OF PEOPLE WHICH WAS GROWING LARGER AS I DREW UP."

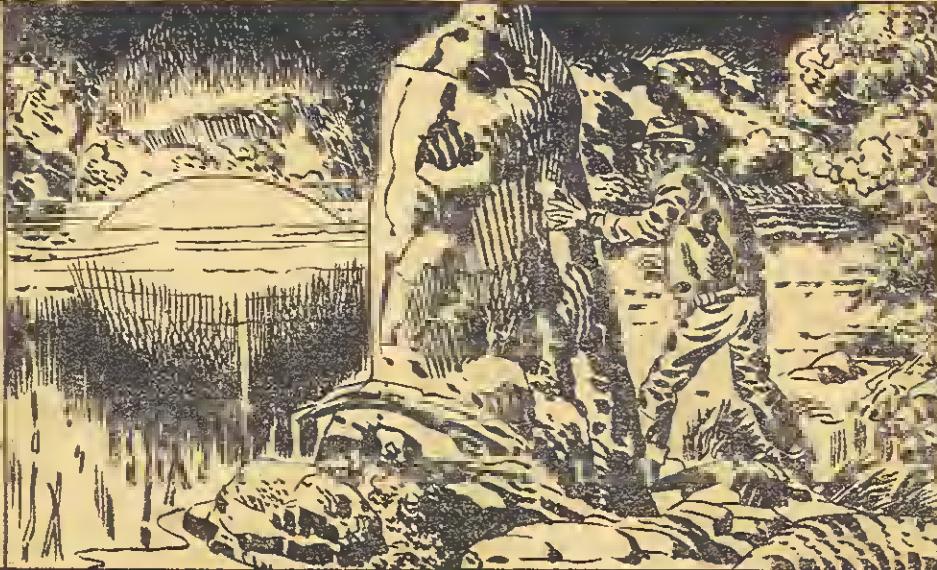




HOW CAN I DESCRIBE THE UTTERLY ASTOUNDING SIGHT WHICH MET MY EYES ON THE SHORES OF LAKE CLAIRE?

IT LOOKED LIKE THE TOP OF A HUGE, FIFTY FOOT ELECTRIC BULB, GLOWING GREEN AND HOT IN THE CENTER OF THE LAKE! I REMEMBERED .

THE SIX SAUCERS I'D SEEN EARLIER THAT DAY. THERE WAS NO DOUBT ABOUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO THE MISSING SEVENTH!



"THERE WASN'T TIME FOR ANYTHING BUT SWIFT ACTION. A THOUSAND, LITTLE EYES OF LIGHT WE'RE DARTING ALONG EVERY DARK SHORE OF THE LAKE. AND THEY WEREN'T FIREFLIES! I DECIDED TO BE THE FIRST MAN ABOARD THE DISC! I SWAM FOR IT!

IT'S A FOOLISH THING TO BE DOING! I DON'T KNOW HOW DANGEROUS THAT THING MAY BE...

"IT'S GLOWING SURFACE WAS NEITHER ROUGH NOR GLASS LIKE! I CLAMBERED ABOARD WITHOUT TOO MUCH DIFFICULTY. THE ONLY OPENING I COULD SEE WAS AN UGLY RENT WHICH IT HAD EVIDENTLY SUFFERED UPON LANDING! I ALSO NOTICED THE ROWBOAT DRIFTING NEARBY. I WAS NOT THE FIRST MAN ABOARD THE THING--



"STRANGELY ENOUGH, THE INTERIOR OF THE THING CAST VERY LITTLE LIGHT.. I SENSED SOMETHING WEIRD AND ALIEN IN THE DIM SHADOWS! WHAT I COULD SEE WAS INTRICATE, COMPACT AND TOTALLY FOREIGN TO THE EYE ...



"MY MIND RANG WITH THE SHOUTS OF THOSE TWO YOUNGSTERS IN TOWN -- MONSTERS FROM MARS! -- FROM MARS -- MARS -- I ALMOST JUMPED OUT OF MY SOGGY SHOES WHEN THE VOICE EXPLODED IN THE DEAD SILENCE.



CH, IT'S YOU, STONE!  
SORRY, BUT I'VE GOT  
TO TURN YOU OUT.  
THIS THING WILL NEED  
A BIT OF CLEANING UP  
BEFORE IT'S READY  
FOR PAYING CUSTOMERS

DON'T TALK LIKE A  
CHILD, GUS! WHAT  
WE'VE GOT HERE  
IS TOO BIG FOR  
YOUR KIND OF  
ANGLE!



"GUS SHIFTED ANGRILY AND BARKED AT ME  
LIKE A HOUND DOG DEFENDING HIS CACHE OF  
BONES AGAINST AN INTRUDER. I GOT THE  
SHOCK OF MY LIFE WHEN I SAW WHAT HIS  
WIDE BULK HAD BEEN BLOCKING OFF FROM  
VIEW...

MY PLANS ARE  
BIG ENOUGH! BUT THEY  
DON'T INCLUDE YOU  
OR ANYBODY ELSE--  
D'YA HEAR ME?



HE STOOD BEHIND  
GUS--A LITTLE  
MAN--NOT MORE  
THAN THIRTY  
INCHES HIGH!  
AND EXCEPT  
FOR THE  
CUTS AND  
BRUISES, HIS  
FACE WAS NO  
DIFFERENT  
THAN ANY  
OF OURS!  
THERE WERE  
OTHERS, BUT  
THEY WERE  
DEAD--LYING  
IN THE  
WRECKAGE  
OF SOME  
SORT OF CONTROL  
MECHANISM  
WHICH HAD  
OBVIOUSLY BLOWN  
UP AND  
KILLED THEM.



HOLD ON, GUS!  
YOU DON'T  
OWN THIS  
THING LEGAL  
LIKE!

CAL SHWITZER!  
WELL, I GUESS YOU  
HEARD WHAT I  
TOLD STONE, HERE!  
I WAS THE FIRST  
TO CLAIM THIS  
THING! -- AND  
I AIM TO KEEP  
IT!



"THIS WAS WHAT I'D FEARED, THE MOMENT I'D  
SPOTTED THE DISC IN THE LAKE-- THE EXPLO-  
SIVE REACTION OF THE VILLAGERS, AMBIVIOUS  
MEN LIKE GUS-- TROUBLE MAKERS LIKE CALVIN  
SHWITZER AND HIS BROOD-- I COULD HEAR  
OTHERS ARRIVING ON THE SCENE... DISASTER  
WAS IN THE AIR -- IT HAD TO BE STOPPED!

WAIT, MEN! I BEG OF YOU!  
WAIT TILL SHERIFF COLBY  
GETS HERE --





"THE SOUND OF THAT SHOT BROUGHT A STORM OF ANIMAL FURY SUCH AS I'D NEVER WITNESSED. BOTH GUS AND HIS VICTIM WERE SWALLOWED IN THE RUSH AND ROAR OF THE VIOLENCE!"



"THERE WERE SHOUTS AND THRASHINGS AND THE BRIGHT FLASH OF BLOOD! I STAGGERED TO MY FEET — ALMOST SOBBING IN DESPAIR — NOT KNOWING WHAT TO DO NEXT IN THAT WHIRLING MADNESS."



"BEYOND THE HEAVING MOUND OF FLAILING ARMS AND LEGS, I CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF THE LITTLE MAN OF THE SAUCER CREW. HE STOOD LIKE A MINIATURE DANIEL IN A DEN OF RAGING BEASTS. SUDDENLY, I FOUND HIS EYES LOOKING SQUARELY INTO MINE!"



"PERHAPS, HE KNEW THAT I'D TRIED TO HELP! THOSE EYES KNEW A LOT OF THINGS. THEY KNEW HOW TO TELL ME WHAT HE WAS ABOUT TO DO, AND, WHEN HE TURNED TO DO IT -- I TURNED AND RAN!"



"SOMETHING UNPLEASANT WAS ABOUT TO HAPPEN IN THE NEXT FEW SECONDS. AND MY FLIGHT TO SAFETY WASN'T BEATING THAT MARGIN! SUDDENLY I SAW THE LASSED RENT AND HEAVED MYSELF INTO THE COOL NIGHT!"



"THERE WAS NO SOUND! NO SEARING BLAST! JUST AN EXPANDING, GROWING SUN AND A TERRIBLE FORCE I COULD NOT SEE OR FEEL-- WHICH CAUGHT ME IN MID-LEAP AND HURLED ME ACROSS THE WATERS."



I STILL BEAR THE ONLY EVIDENCE THERE IS OF THAT FANTASTIC NIGHT! THEY ARE RADIATION BURNS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN-- AND I'VE BEEN TOLD I SHALL SUCCUMB TO THEM!



"THE GLOWING HULL OF THE SAUCER BEGAN TO BLAZE WITH FIERY INTENSITY BENEATH MY FEET! IN THAT MOMENT I LEAPED INTO THE LAKE!"



"I WAS THE ONLY SURVIVOR OF AN INCIDENT NO ONE COULD EXPLAIN! MY EXPLANATION WAS ATTRIBUTED TO DELIRIUM AT THE HOSPITAL. AFTER THAT, IT WAS ACCEPTED AS AN UNFORTUNATE RESULT OF MY INJURIES..



THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED, DOC. EVERY WORD OF IT IS TRUE-- OF COURSE, OF COURSE. YOU MUST REST NOW, STONE!



# DEATH <sup>By</sup> MAGIC

THE ENGLISH EARL OF ERROL, WHILE SCOUTING THROUGH THE EERIE JUNGLE.. ON A BIG GAME HUNTING EXPEDITION IN KENYA COLONY, CAME UPON A PLACE IN THE SOMBRE VEGETATION WHERE HE SAW DISPLAYED WEIRD NATIVE SYMBOLS!



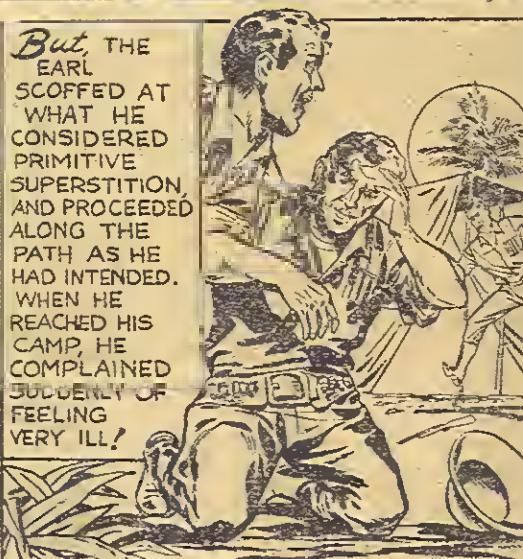
A WITCH DOCTOR, LURKING IN THE LEAFY SHADOWS NEAR-BY CAUTIONED HIM TO USE ANOTHER PATH!



THE EARL WAS A MAN WHO HAD NEVER BELIEVED IN BLACK MAGIC, SO HE CERTAINLY COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MENTALLY SUSCEPTIBLE. YET, WHEN A DOCTOR COULD FIND NO DIAGNOSIS FOR THE FRIGHTENING SYMPTOMS, HE HAD THE WITCH DOCTOR BROUGHT IN IMMEDIATELY!



But, THE EARL SCOFFED AT WHAT HE CONSIDERED PRIMITIVE SUPERSTITION, AND PROCEEDED ALONG THE PATH AS HE HAD INTENDED. WHEN HE REACHED HIS CAMP, HE COMPLAINED SUDDENLY OF FEELING VERY ILL!



When ACCUSED OF PRACTICING BLACK MAGIC AND THREATENED WITH PRISON, THE WITCH DOCTOR CALLED OFF HIS CURSE AND THE EARL GRADUALLY EMERGED FROM HIS STUPOR! HE WAS LATER MURDERED, HOWEVER, IN 1940!



HE LOOKED LIKE A THOUSAND OTHER MEN EXCEPT FOR THIS ONE THING THAT MADE HIM A MOST UNIQUE PERSONALITY!

# FLETCHER'S TALENT!

"E - HE'S ACTUALLY FLOATING IN MID-AIR! HE WILLED HIS BODY TO RISE - AND IT DID! I - I SEE IT HAPPENING! BUT I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!"



IT IS SEPTEMBER 2, 1948, IN THE APARTMENT OF ARTHUR FLETCHER, A SELF STYLED PSYCHIC INVESTIGATOR...

"SITUATION! REALLY, MISTER FLETCHER! IS IT WEREN'T FOR OUR REPUTATION WE WOULD THINK YOU HAS SOME SORT OF JOKE!"

IT IS NOT A JOKE! GENTLEMEN, I ASK ONLY THAT YOU LISTEN TO ME! THAT YOU BELIEVE WHAT YOU SEE WITH YOUR OWN EYES! SEE - AND THEN TELL THE WORLD!



EACH OF YOU REPRESENTS A GREAT NEWSPAPER! YOU ARE MEN WHO DEAL IN THE TRUTH! YOUR READERS WILL BELIEVE WHAT YOU TELL THEM! THAT IS WHY I ASKED YOU TO COME HERE TONIGHT!

IF WHAT WE TELL THEM IS CREDIBLE, YES! BUT - LEVITATION? PEOPLE DEFYING THE LAWS OF GRAVITY AND SOARING THROUGH THE AIR BY SHEER WILL POWER ALONE! NONSENSE!



NO! THE EAST HAS KNOWN THE SECRET FOR CENTURIES! IN TIBET I SAW IT DONE! I STUDIED! I LEARNED! I FASTED AND I CONTEMPLATED THE INFINITE! AND I SUCCEEDED!

WE KNOW YOU'VE BEEN IN TIBET, FLETCHER---IN FACT, I EXPECTED THIS INTERVIEW TO DEAL WITH THE OCCULT. THAT'S WHY I CAME! MY READERS LIKE A TOUCH FOR THE UNUSUAL!

BUT THIS IS JUST A TRIFLE **TOO** UNUSUAL! AND MY TIME IS VALUABLE! SO IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I WON'T WAIT FOR THE AH-DEMONSTRATION!

YOU MUST STAY! I SHALL LIE ON THAT COUCH AND THEN RISE IN THE AIR ABOVE IT! YOU MUST WAIT AND SEE!



ARTHUR FLETCHER'S THIN FACE GLEAMED WITH AN INNER FIRE! THE SUNKEN EYES BLAZED WITH CONVICTION! JOHN DARCY STAYED! BUT ONLY OUT OF CURIOSITY!

**PARLOR TRICKS!**  
SAH! I REMEMBER WHEN MAGDA FLETCHER HELPED HER HUSBAND WRITE HIS BOOKS **EXPOSING** PSYCHIC TRICKERY!

IF YOU WILL REMAIN QUIET, GENTLEMEN! WHAT MY HUSBAND IS ABOUT TO ATTEMPT REQUIRES THE UTMOST CONCENTRATION!



A DOZEN PAIRS OF EYES FOCUSED ON A FACE SUDDENLY BEADED WITH PERSPIRATION, ON A THIN BODY STRAINING TO RELEASE ITSELF FROM THE POWER THAT HAS BOUND MAN TO THE EARTH SINCE TIME BEGAN...



A DOZEN MEN SAW IT! THEY SAW FLETCHER RISE FROM HIS COUCH, HOVER FOR A MOMENT SIX INCHES ABOVE IT, AND THEN SLOWLY SINK BACK!

HE **DID** IT! IT'S INCREDIBLE! BUT HE ACTUALLY HOVERED IN MID-AIR!

AND I'VE SEEN THE SAME THING DONE BY **MAGICIANS** IN CHEAP CARNIVALS! BUT I MUST CONFESS THAT FLETCHER'S STAGE EFFECTS ARE BETTER THAN THEIRS. IT LOOKED ALMOST CONVINCING ENOUGH TO BE **REAL**!

BUT--YOU **SAW**! I CAN GIVE MANKIND THE GREATEST GIFT IT HAS EVER KNOWN! FREEDOM FROM THE BONDS OF EARTH! AND

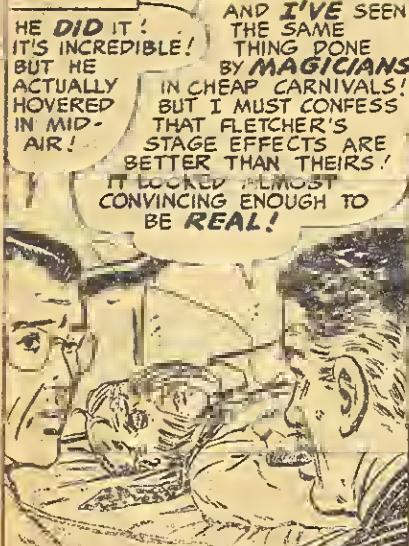
YOU SCOFF! YOU FOOL!

I WOULD BE A FOOL-

IF I FELL FOR YOUR RIDICULOUS TRICKERY! SINCE YOU SPEAK PLAINLY, FLETCHER, I MAY AS WELL DO THE SAME!

YOU'RE A FAKE! A CHEAP CHARLATAN WHO IS TRYING TO USE THE PRESS TO FURTHER HIS OWN ENDS. WHATEVER THEY MIGHT BE---

HOW DARE YOU!



SO! THE FASTING ASCETIC IS HUMAN, AFTER ALL! I THINK I SHALL GIVE YOU SPACE IN MY COLUMN, FLETCHER! BUT NOT IN THE WAY YOU HOPED!

NO! DARCY, I-I, APOLOGIZE! WHEN A MAN LIVES WITH A PURPOSE— AS I HAVE, HE FORGETS HIS MANNERS AT TIMES! PLEASE-- FORGIVE ME!

BUT JOHN DARCY WAS NO LONGER LISTENING. HE TURNED AWAY...

COMING, GENTLEMEN? YES—I GUESS WE'D BETTER! IN FACT, I THINK WE'D ALL DO WELL TO FORGET THIS WHOLE THING! HOWEVER IT WAS DONE, OUR READERS WOULDNT BE-LIEVE IT ANYWAY! SORRY, MISTER FLETCHER!



BUT YOU SAW! WHAT I DID WAS NOT ACCOMPLISHED BY TRICKERY! YOU CAN EXAMINE ME! EXAMINE THIS ROOM! YOU MUSTN'T LET YOURSELVES BE LED BY THE DOUBTS OF ONE MAN!

WE COULD EXAMINE THE ROOM, FLETCHER! BUT YOU'RE QUITE CLEVER! I DON'T IMAGINE WE'D FIND ANYTHING! BUT DON'T WORRY, YOU'LL GET YOUR PUBLICITY! I, PROMISE YOU.

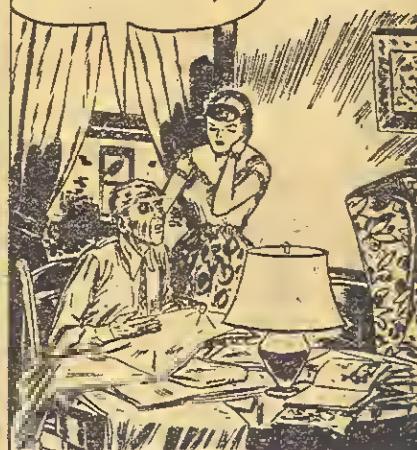


ALL RIGHT! GO ON! WRITE YOUR ARTICLE! BUT ONE DAY YOU'LL SEE! ONE DAY I'LL HUMBLE YOU! I'LL SHOW YOU FOR THE FOOL YOU ARE!



SO, OUT OF A SINGLE MOMENT WAS BORN FIRST CONTEMPT—THEN HATRED!

CHARLATAN! FAKER! THAT'S WHAT HE CALLS ME, MAGDA! DARCY LAUGHS AT ME! ONE DAY HE SHALL PAY FOR THAT!



FOR A FEW DAYS THE WORLD LAUGHED, AS JOHN DARCY LAUGHED! THEN ARTHUR FLETCHER WAS FORGOTTEN BY THE WORLD AND BY JOHN DARCY! BUT ARTHUR FLETCHER HAD NOT FORGOTTEN!

FLETCHER! WELL, WELL! THE PRODIGAL RETURNS! IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME! WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE? MORE TRICKS?

JUST— A VISIT, DARCY. I'VE MADE MANY VISITS TODAY. I'VE SEEN AND SPOKEN TO EVERY MAN WHO WAS PRESENT THAT NIGHT. I'VE COME BACK TO ASK YOU TO ANOTHER DEMONSTRATION!



SEVEN MONTHS, DARCY! FOR SEVEN MONTHS I'VE TAKEN ONLY ENOUGH FOOD TO KEEP ME ALIVE! I'VE WORKED! I'VE

DEVELOPED MY POWERS OF CONCENTRATION TO A POINT YOU COULD NOT COMPREHEND! BECAUSE AT LAST I HAD A DRIVING FORCE-- HATE!



NATE DARCY! THERE IS NO MORE POWERFUL HUMAN EMOTION! COME TO MY HOME TONIGHT! THIS TIME YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DOUBT! THIS TIME YOU WILL CRAWL! YOU WILL RECAST EVERY LYING WORD YOU WROTE!

SORRY! I HAVE OTHER PLANS FOR THIS EVENING!

THEN YOU WILL CHANGE YOUR PLANS! THE OTHERS ARE COMING! IT WOULD LOOK AS IF YOU WERE AFRAID TO COME, WOULDN'T IT? BECAUSE IF I SUCCEED — YOU WILL BE THE LAUGHING STOCK!



HATE, NAKED AND ALIVE, LEAPED BETWEEN THESE TWO AS SPARKS FLY BETWEEN TWO CHARGED WIRES! ARTHUR FLETCHER SMILED — AND FOR JOHN DARCY THERE WAS NO CHOICE...

IF YOU WILL BE SEATED, GENTLEMEN, WE WILL BEGIN AGAIN! BUT TONIGHT — THERE WILL BE A DIFFERENCE!



TONIGHT, THERE WILL BE NO QUESTION OF TRICKERY! TONIGHT MY HUSBAND SHALL RISE FROM HIS COUCH AND FLOAT! OUT! THROUGH THAT WINDOW!

THEN HE SHALL RETURN!

OUT THROUGH THE WINDOW! THAT — THAT'S INSANE! WE'RE NINE STORIES UP!



THERE IS NO CAUSE FOR ALARM! MY HUSBAND HAS DONE IT MANY TIMES — SINCE WE SAW YOU LAST! WE ASK ONLY THAT YOU REMAIN ABSOLUTELY QUIET! AS BEFORE! THE SLIGHTEST NOISE MIGHT BREAK HIS CONCENTRATION!

BAH!



JOHN DARCY SPAT OUT THE WORD! BUT HE MUST HAVE BEEN THINKING! IF FLETCHER SUCCEEDED, DARCY WAS A RUINED MAN! HE MUST HAVE BEEN THINKING — BUT HE SAT SILENT AFTER THAT! FOR A LITTLE WHILE!



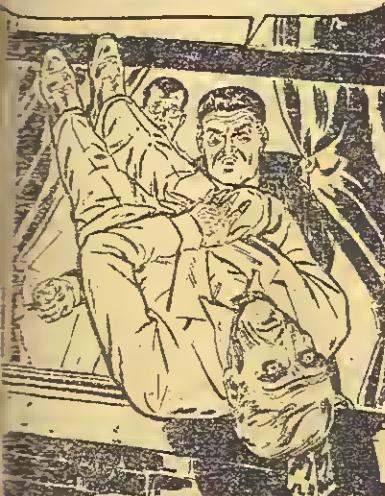
"NO MAN SPOKE THAT WHAT WAS HAPPENING COULD NOT HAVE BEEN HAPPENING! BUT IT DID! A BODY ROSE, FLOATED IN MID-AIR AND MOVED! TOWARD AN OPEN WINDOW!"



"A MAN DEFIED THE NATURAL LAWS OF THE UNIVERSE! AND JOHN DARCY MUST HAVE HEARD THE LAUGHTER! THE LAUGHTER THAT THIS TIME WOULD BE DIRECTED AT HIM!"



"NO! IT'S STILL SOME KIND OF TRICK! I WON'T BELIEVE IT! SOMETHING'S HOLDING HIM UP! SOMETHING REAL! WE'RE NOT CHILDREN TO BE FOOLED..."



"YOU-KILLED HIM! MURDERER! YOU KNEW! YOU KNEW WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF YOU BROKE THE THREAD! YOU WANTED HIM TO DIE! YOU WANTED IT!"

"NO - I DIDN'T KNOW! IT WAS AN ACCIDENT! AN ACCIDENT!"



"IT WAS MAGDA FLETCHER WHO SPOKE OUT A WARRANT, WHO CHARGED JOHN DARCY WITH MURDER! JOHN DARCY WAS TRIED IN THE CRIMINAL COURTS, APRIL 16, 1949..."



"THERE COULD BE ONLY ONE VERDICT, OF COURSE! NOT GUILTY! THE LAW DEMANDS CONCRETE EVIDENCE! BUT JOHN DARCY HAS BEEN PUNISHED. HE HAS VANISHED! SOMEWHERE, HE SITS ALONE READING, RELAXING AT LAST."

# READY TO RETIRE

ANDY WELLS slipped stealthily from his car and went noiselessly across the dark alley. He flattened his back against the dirty brick wall and stood silently while his eyes grew accustomed to the dark night, his hand automatically feeling the cold steel .38 pistol in his belt.

Andy edged his way along the wall like a stalking cat, alert, cautious, unafraid. He thrilled a little as he thought of what awaited him, this was the end of the journey, the end of danger, fear and mistrust. He had waited a lifetime for this moment. He had dreamed of it, killed for it, and had been near death many times for it. But now it was almost over.

When he stood below the warehouse window, his eyes pierced the darkness. Satisfied that he was not observed, he pushed open the unlocked window and crawled through. Once inside he felt relief, but he knew this feeling to be the greatest trickery in the business. As his eyes roamed the huge warehouse for signs of the guard, his keen mind checked every point of his plan.

Suddenly a faint smile played around his sensuous mouth. He was a little amused at how easy all this had come about. He had gotten a job at Foster and Aimes Importers and had waited, watched, planned. Then finally the shipment of Chinese articles came from Hong Kong. One of the crates was marked with a peculiar Chinese figure, meaningless to anyone except Andy Wells. After that it was easy to slip over and unlock a window and hide a pinch bar.

Andy quickly made his way to the marked crate, which was still unopened. He slipped his hand between two boxes and grasped the steel pinch bar. As his hand withdrew with the bar, he thought of King Lang. He smiled. If King Lang could only see him now! Fat, lazy King Lang whom he'd outwitted so easily in Hong Kong!

Lang had never guessed about the small box with the false bottom. Andy, pretending to be a novice, had shown interest only in the two worthless stones in the outer box and had paid Lang



a thousand dollars to smuggle them into the United States. It was no secret that Lang had been after the Hsung Emerald—he would have killed for much less—but now it was Andy's—Lang could go back to his pipe in ridicule and defeat.

Andy slipped the pinch bar under a corner board. He knew just where the box would be. King had drawn him a picture. He was just applying pressure on the bar when a voice, hard and cold startled him. "Don't move!"

A beam of light stabbed into Andy's face, blinding him. Hahit had taught him to control his nerves. He relaxed and patiently waited for the one small break. The guard's voice was familiar. He remembered a large man, soft and slow.

The guard spoke again. "Andy Wells! I might have known! Don't try anything, I'll use this gun I'm holding!" The light moved forward a little.

"That light's hurtin' my eyes! Do you have to do that?" Andy's voice was steady, calculating. His muscles taut, ready.

As the beam of light lowered, Andy saw a sliver of light shoot off the steel automatic in the guard's hand. Andy brought the pinch bar up hard and threw it at the gun. Metal clashed against metal, it was a lucky throw. In the same second, Andy jumped across the crate, his hard fists punching like pile drivers. The first blow caught the guard full in the stomach. He doubled forward with a grunt. Andy brought his knee up into the guard's face and at the same time brought a fist down on the back of his neck. The guard fell face down on the cement floor.

Andy retrieved the pinch bar and went back to the crate. With hurried movements, he inserted the bar and heard the sharp screech as the nails pulled out of the wood. He put his strong fingers under the board and jerked it up.

At that instant there was a blinding flash and a terrific explosion. In the split second that Andy was still alive, he knew that King Lang had found the secret compartment and had rigged the marked box as a booby trap.

The explosion splintered the crate and many boxes around it. It broke windows for a half block around, and Andy Wells was scattered all over the warehouse.

Stop and think! Haven't you ever thought--so and so is a pig! Or that women behaves like a cat! Well, perhaps you're closer to the truth than you think! At least that was--

# STANWICK'S THEORY!

RICHARD, NO MATTER WHAT'S HAPPENED IN THE PAST! IT DOESN'T PROVE YOUR FATHER IS RIGHT! HE'S A SICK MAN! YOU MUSTN'T TAKE HIM SERIOUSLY! HIS IDEAS, DON'T MAKE SENSE!

BUT THEY DO! GET OUT, DOCTOR! FOR YOUR SOUL'S SAKE! IF YOU DON'T, ONE DAY YOU'LL REGRET IT! AS I REGRET THE DAY I WAS BORN!

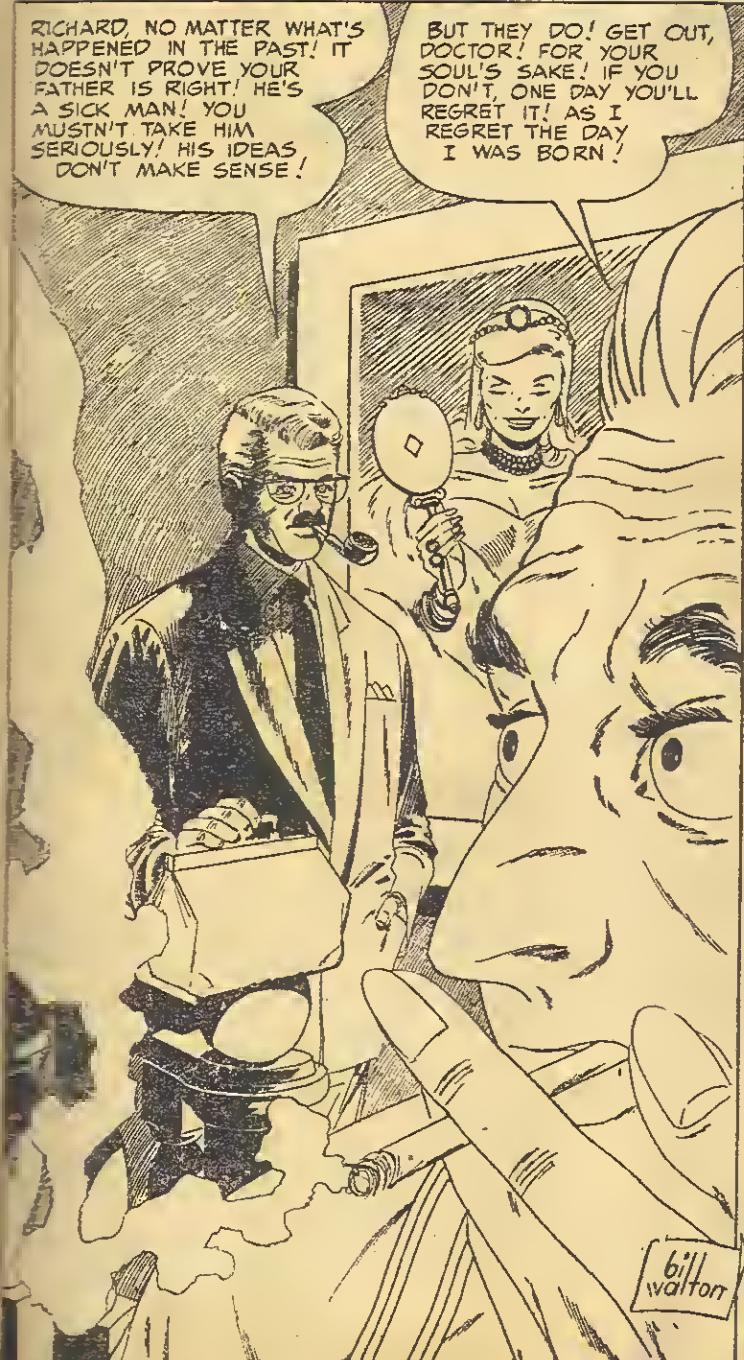
IF YOU ARE ONE OF THE MORBIDLY CURIOUS, THEN PERHAPS YOU ATTENDED ARNOLD STANWICK'S FUNERAL... AFTER ALL, HE WAS A PROMINENT MAN... BUT PERHAPS YOU WONDERED WHY THERE WERE SO FEW MOURNERS? WHY THE COFFIN WAS SEALED? THIS IS WHY!

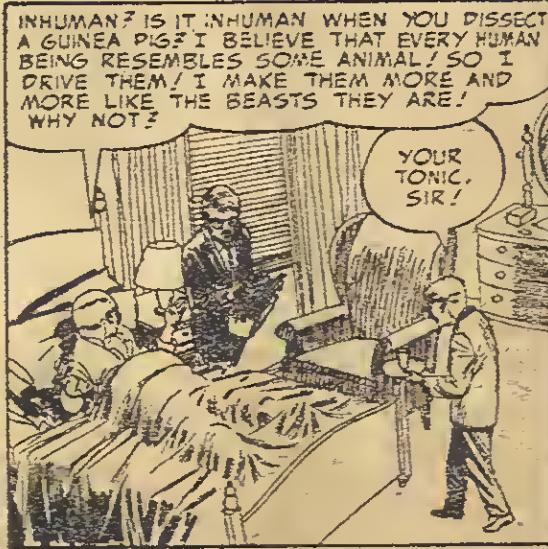
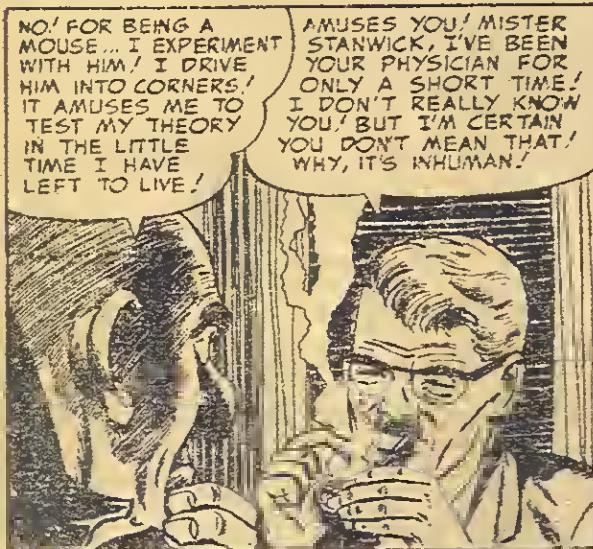
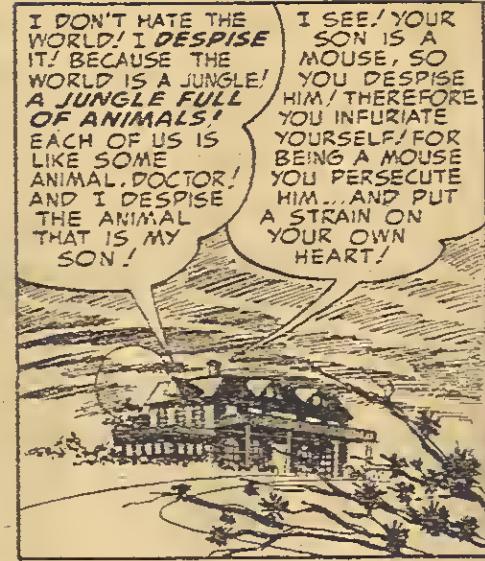
FATHER, I'M IN TROUBLE! I'VE RUN UP A BIG GAMBLING BILL! YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME! PLEASE!

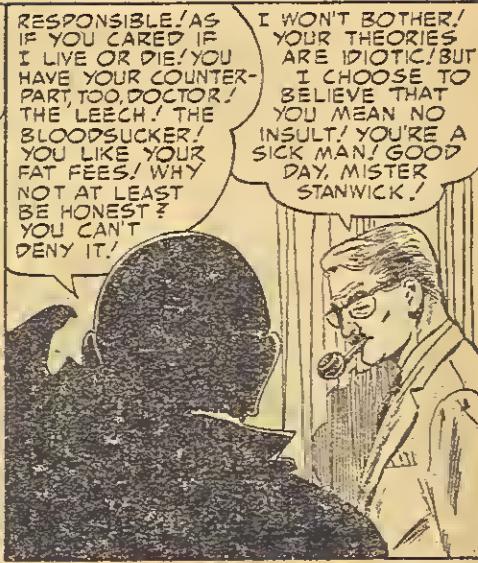
MONEYZ YOU NEED MONEYZ THEN... FIND IT SOMEWHERE ELSE! GET OUT, YOU MOUSE! TAKE THAT TWITCHING NOSE OF YOURS OUT OF MY SIGHT!

PLEASE, HE SAYS! HOW HE SQUEALS, EH, DOCTOR? MY SON! LOOK AT HIM! HE EVEN LOOKS LIKE A MOUSE! GET OUT, MOUSE! IF I HAD TWICE AS MANY MILLIONS YOU STILL WOULDN'T GET A CENT!

YES, FATHER!







THERE WERE TIMES AFTER THAT WHEN DAVID STONE DETESTED HIS PATIENT, TIMES WHEN HE REGRETTED THE CODE OF ETHICS WHICH MADE HIM RETURN AGAIN AND AGAIN TO THAT HOUSE! BUT HE DID RETURN!

YOUR SISTER WAS A VERY BEAUTIFUL GIRL, RICHARD! IT SEEMS A PITY THAT YOU DENY YOURSELF...WHAT SHE HAD! SHE SEEMS SO...SO VIVACIOUS, SO ALIVE! EVEN NOW!

ISN'T WHAT YOU MEAN...THAT I'M A FOOL AND A COWARD TO STAY IN THIS HOUSE, DOCTOR? BUT ELAINE WAS A PEACOCK! I'M... A MOUSE!

FATHER IS RIGHT, YOU KNOW! ONCE, I DIDN'T THINK SO! BUT I'VE LEARNED! IF HE WEREN'T... I'D FIGHT, WOULDN'T I? I'D DO SOMETHING!

I DIDN'T MEAN THAT! RICHARD, YOUR FATHER IS A SICK MAN! I'VE WANTED TO TALK TO HIM SO MANY TIMES! YOU MUSTN'T TAKE HIM SERIOUSLY!

IS HE, DOCTOR? SHE IS BEAUTIFUL, ISN'T SHE? THAT'S WHAT KILLED HER! SHE LOVED CLOTHES, JEWELS! SHE LOVED TO ADORN HERSELF! FATHER SAID SHE WAS A PEACOCK! AND HE WAS RIGHT! SHE WAS!

SHE FELL IN LOVE! SHE WANTED TO MARRY! BUT FATHER KNEW HER! HER SWEETHEART WAS POOR! FATHER OFFERED HER MONEY IF SHE'D GIVE HIM UP! OTHERWISE, NO MORE SILKS, NO MORE DIAMONDS! AND SHE ACCEPTED!



SHE TOOK IT BECAUSE SHE WAS WHAT FATHER SAID SHE WAS! FOR SIX MONTHS SHE LIVED ONLY FOR HER TRINKETS! THEN ONE DAY SHE PUT ON HER FINEST GOWN AND DROVE HER CAR OVER AN EMBANKMENT! SHE DIED A PEACOCK!

I DIDN'T KNOW! I'M SORRY! BUT SURELY THAT DOESN'T PROVE YOUR FATHER'S THEORY!

YES! IT DOES! GET OUT, DOCTOR! GET OUT OF THIS CURSED HOUSE! GET OUT AND DON'T COME BACK! FOR YOUR SOUL'S SAKE! IF YOU DON'T, ONE DAY YOU'LL REGRET IT! AS I REGRET THE DAY I WAS BORN!

DAVID STONE RECALLS THAT MOMENT SO VIVIDLY! ALMOST, HE, TOO BELIEVED AS RICHARD STANWICK BELIEVED! BUT HE SHOOK THE FEELING OFF! HE WAS STILL A DOCTOR, A MAN OF COLD SCIENCE! HE CLIMBED THE STAIRS THOUGHTFULLY... BUT NOT CONVINCED!

WELL, YOU APPEAR TO BE IN FINE FETTLE AND FEELING EVEN BETTER, THIS MORNING! DOCTOR! YOU'RE LOOKING COME IN, AND WELL, MISTER SHARE MY GOOD NEWS! OR HAS RICHARD ALREADY TOLD YOU THAT HE'S GOING TO BE ARRESTED?

ARRESTED? YOUR SON? SO THAT'S WHY HE BEHAVED SO STRANGELY, THEN! AND YOU CALL THAT GOOD NEWS?

OH, COME NOW, DOCTOR! DON'T LOOK SO SHOCKED! WE'RE BOTH MEN OF LOGIC! SENTIMENT ISN'T FOR US! YOU SHOULD BE HAPPY FOR ME! I'M ABOUT TO PROVE MY THEORY!

RICHARD HAS STOLEN FROM ME! FROM MY SAFE! NOW, WE'LL SEE! WE'LL SEE IF HE'LL GO ALL THE WAY! IF HE'LL FIGHT ME!

HE STOLE FROM YOU... AND YOU'D HAVE HIM ARRESTED? BUT THAT... THAT'S INHUMAN! HE CAME TO YOU FOR HELP AND YOU REFUSED HIM! HE MUST HAVE BEEN DESPERATE! WHAT CAN YOU HATE TO OWN?

PROOF! PROOF THAT I AM RIGHT! THAT PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS! I'VE WAITED A LONG TIME FOR THAT PROOF! ONCE I HAD A DAUGHTER! I THOUGHT SHE WOULD BE MY PROOF! BUT SHE CHEATED ME! SHE DIED!

BUT NOW... RICHARD IS A MOUSE! A MOUSE IN A CORNER! WHAT WILL HE DO, DOCTOR? EVEN A MOUSE WILL FIGHT IF IT'S TRAPPED! HE MIGHT EVEN TRY TO KILL ME! HE HATES ME ENOUGH TO DO THAT!

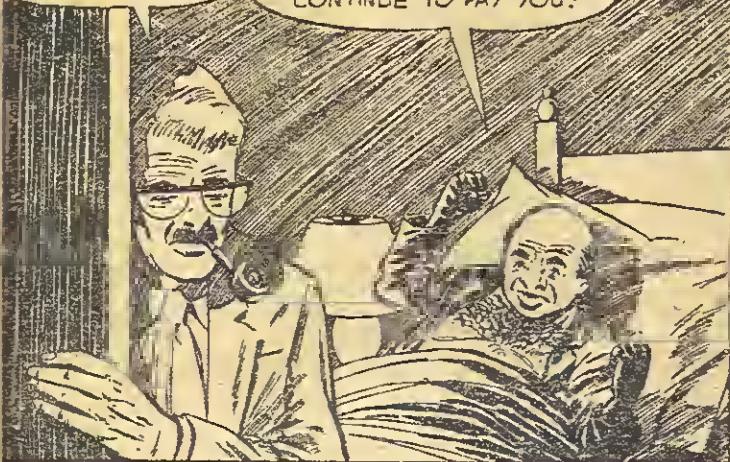
YOU'RE MAD! YOU MUST BE! I'VE HAD ALL OF THIS THAT I CAN STAND! I'M A DOCTOR! BUT I'M ALSO A MAN!



MISTER STANWICK,  
I SUGGEST THAT  
YOU FIND ANOTHER  
PHYSICIAN!

BRAVO! THE LEECH PLAYS HERO, EH?  
BRAVO, DOCTOR! BUT WE'LL DISPENSE  
WITH THE PRETTY SPEECHES!  
YOU'LL COME BACK! AS I  
CONTINUE TO PAY YOU!

REVOLTED, DAVID STONE LEFT. BUT  
ARNOLD STANWICK WAS AT LEAST  
PARTLY RIGHT! STONE WAS TO  
COME BACK! ONCE! BECAUSE  
THAT NIGHT HIS TELEPHONE RANG!



A GREAT DEAL! BECAUSE  
YOU'RE RIGHT, DOCTOR! AN OLD  
BOAR! A SURELY VIOLENT OLD  
BOAR! YOU HAVEN'T LOOKED  
AT FATHER'S FACE, DOCTOR!  
LOOK AT IT NOW! LOOK  
AT HIS FACE!

VERY WELL!  
IF THAT WILL  
CALM YOU...  
GREAT SCOTT!

NONSENSE, DOCTOR? IS IT  
NONSENSE NOW? HE HAD A THEORY!  
IF YOU LIVE LIKE A CERTAIN ANIMAL  
YOU BECOME THAT ANIMAL! I  
DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED IN  
THIS ROOM AFTER I LEFT! BUT  
HE HAD A THEORY!

HE HAD A THEORY...  
AND HE PROVED IT!  
HAHAHAHAHAHA!

SUCH THINGS CANNOT BE! REASON TELLS  
US THAT! BUT DOCTOR DAVID STONE WAS  
THERE! HE SAW! THE STORY IS TRUE! IT  
MUST BE! IF NOT, WHY WAS ARNOLD  
STANWICK BURIED IN A SEALED COFFIN?  
WHY WAS IT THAT AFTER HIS DEATH  
NO MAN WAS PERMITTED TO LOOK UPON  
HIS FACE!

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Nobody is indispensable to mother nature! Not even man! She may already have replaced us with a growing super-brat like--

# HORRIBLE HERMAN!



"AT THE VERY MOMENT I DELIVERED HERMAN INTO THIS LIFE, I KNEW HE WAS--"DIFFERENT." THERE CAME A THOUGHT TO MY MIND--WHICH NEITHER BELONGED TO ME--NOR MY ASSISTANTS--NOR, HARDLY TO THE WOMAN WHO HAD DIED IN CHILD-BIRTH. I SENSED THE THOUGHT AGAIN. 'I MUST SURVIVE,' IT QUAKED.

POOR THING! PERHAPS IT'S BETTER THIS WAY. SHE'D NEVER HAVE BEEN PROUD OF THAT PECULIARLY, UGLY CHILD!

NOT ALL OF US ARE BORN BEAUTIFUL! HOWEVER, THIS BOY MAY DEVELOP QUALITIES TO COMPENSATE HIM WELL FOR HIS HANDICAP!

TELLING THE NEXT OF KIN WAS A DUTY NO DOCTOR ENJOYED, BUT, IT HAD TO BE DONE.

ETHEL--GONE--IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE! THE NEW BABY IS OUR SEVENTH CHILD. TAKING CARE OF SUCH A BROOD WON'T BE EASY.

YOU NEEDN'T WORRY ABOUT GETTING THE PROPER ATTENTION FOR THE LITTLE ONE, MISTER KROLL. I'LL DROP BY FREQUENTLY AND LOOK IN ON HIM!



"HERMAN WAS TWO MONTHS OLD BEFORE I WAS FREE TO CARRY OUT MY PROMISE! I EXAMINED THE HOMELY LITTLE BUDDHA WHO RECLINED IN HIS BATTERED CRIB... THE HUB OF ALL THE SQUALID POVERTY SURROUNDING IT... AND, THE BABY'S EYES STARING MYSTICALLY INTO MINE... WERE MERELY BABY EYES..."

THIS IS MY ELDEST DAUGHTER, CLARA! SHE'S THE WOMAN OF THE HOUSE NOW!

HELLO, DR. MASON! PAPA TOLD ME YOU PROMISED TO DROP BY AND SEE HOW HERMAN WAS GETTING ALONG!

HE SEEMS WELL CARED FOR! KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK, CLARA! I'LL DROP BY AGAIN VERY SOON!

"I WASN'T FOOLED! I'D BEEN SEEMINGLY CARELESS WITH A SAFETY PIN ON HERMAN'S DIAPER! EVEN, AS I LEFT, I CAUGHT A SIDE GLANCE OF LITTLE FINGERS SNAPPING SHUT THE STEEL SHAFTS OF THE PIN!"

"IN THE MONTHS THAT FOLLOWED I SAW HERMAN MANY TIMES! HE WAS ALMOST A YEAR OLD WHEN I FOUND THE BOOK! A VERY UNUSUAL BOOK FOR A CHILD OF HIS YEARS!"

MODERN MATHEMATICS BY THAYER! CLARA, COME IN HERE! HOW ON EARTH DID THIS BOOK GET UNDER THE BABY'S PILLOW? DID YOU PUT IT THERE?

YEAH... HERMAN TOLD ME TO GET THAT BOOK! SO I BOUGHT IT FOR HIM!

"I'M YOUR FRIEND, CLARA! YOU NEEDN'T FIB TO ME! IT ISN'T POSSIBLE FOR A YEAR OLD BABY TO MAKE KNOWN THAT HE WANTS OR UNDERSTANDS THIS KIND OF BOOK!"

"HERMAN CAN! HONEST, DOC! HE CAN TALK REAL GOOD... ONLY, NOT LIKE WE DO!"



"CLARA'S EXPLANATION WAS ALL THE PROOF I NEEDED! IF HERMAN WAS NOW CAPABLE OF PROJECTING HIS THOUGHTS HE COULD ALSO RECEIVE THE MENTAL IMAGES OF OTHERS! AS SHE LEFT THE ROOM I MADE MY FIRST ATTEMPT TO CONTACT THE MIND BEHIND THE INNOCENT EYES OF A BABY!"



I CAN FORCE YOU TO MAKE YOURSELF KNOWN, YOUNG FELLOW! YOURS IS AN INFANT'S BODY... TINY... SOFT... HELPLESS...

PUT THAT SCALPEL AWAY BEFORE I REACH INTO YOUR MIND AND WRING IT LIKE A MOP! YOU'LL DIE SCREAMING!

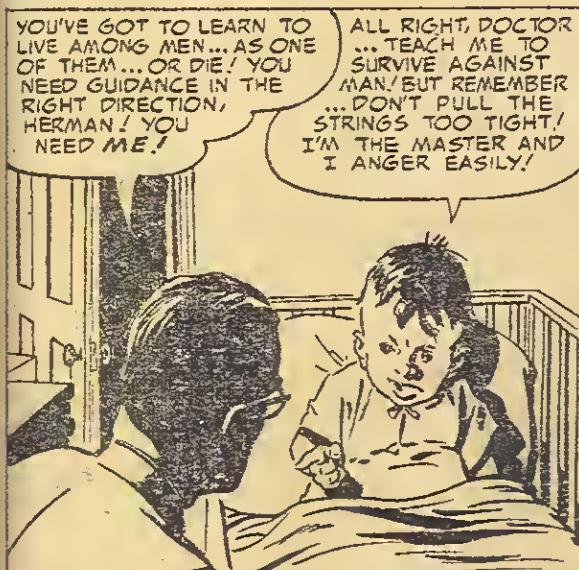


HOLD IT, HERMAN! BEFORE YOU DO ANYTHING, LET ME HAVE MY SAY! YOU'RE A NEWCOMER IN A WORLD OF 2 BILLION HUMANS! THEY REPRESENT HEAVY ODDS... EVEN AGAINST YOUR POWERS IN THEIR FULL MATURITY!



YOU'VE GOT TO LEARN TO LIVE AMONG MEN... AS ONE OF THEM... OR DIE! YOU NEED GUIDANCE IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, HERMAN! YOU NEED ME!

ALL RIGHT, DOCTOR... TEACH ME TO SURVIVE AGAINST MAN! BUT REMEMBER... DON'T PULL THE STRINGS TOO TIGHT! I'M THE MASTER AND I ANGER EASILY!



THIS PACT OF FEAR LASTED FIVE LONG YEARS! HERMAN POSSESSED UNDREAMED OF POWERS! I HELPED THEM GROW AND DEVELOP! BUT, I COULDN'T RID HIM OF HIS BLASTED ARROGANCE!

WHAT MORE CAN I POSSIBLY LEARN FROM YOU? THERE'S A WHOLE PLANET, NO, TO BE SEEN! NOW, I INTEND TO DISCOVER HOW A RACE OF ANIMALS AS MENTALLY UN-DEVELOPED AS MAN COULD CALL ITSELF CIVILIZED!

HERMAN! GREAT DAY... HE'S FADING AWAY!



HORRIFIED AT WHAT WAS TAKING PLACE BEFORE MY VERY EYES, I WATCHED HERMAN TURN TO NOTHINGNESS! AND AT THAT PRECISE INSTANT...

HELP! MY ARM! PLEASE, HERMAN! STOP THE PAIN! O-O-W-W-W-



THAT SCREAM, IT'S CLARA! WH-WHAT'S HAPPENING OUT THERE?

YOU LITTLE FIEND! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO YOUR SISTER? MASTERING THE ART OF TELEPORTATION IS A GREAT FEAT, BUT WHY THIS SENSELESS DISPLAY OF BRUTALITY!



WHY, SHE'S NO MORE THAN AN ANIMAL! I WAS MERELY TESTING A MENTAL FORCE ON HER! NOW WITH THE POWER OF TELEPORTATION I PLAN TO SEE THIS PLANET! GOOD-BYE, DOCTOR,

HE COULD BREAK DOWN HIS ATOMIC STRUCTURE ... INTO A BEAM OF ENERGY AND TRAVEL WITH THE SPEED OF LIGHT! HERMAN WAS EVERYWHERE ... CAUSING TROUBLE ... FRIGHTENING PEOPLE! THERE WAS ALWAYS THE TRAIL OF STRANGE UNEXPLAINABLE HAPPENINGS!



HOW TO DEAL WITH AN INCORRIGIBLE YOUNG SUPERMAN? IT WAS A QUESTION I WAS DEBATING ONE AFTERNOON, WHEN HERMAN SUDDENLY MATERIALIZED BEFORE ME! HE HAD GROWN A SNEER!

SO YOU'RE BACK, EH? I SUPPOSE YOU ENJOYED YOUR LITTLE SPREE... TORMENTING CREATURES NOT YET ABLE TO COMPETE WITH YOU...

HAH! THEY THINK THEY'RE THE TOP RUNG OF NATURE'S LADDER! THEY'RE IN FOR A SURPRISE!



HERMAN... I WAS HOPING TO HOLD YOUR CHARACTER TO FIT A GREATER ROLE THAN YOU HAVE IN MIND! BUT...

WE'LL NEVER SEE EYE TO EYE, DOCTOR! YOU VALUE MEN HIGHLY! IF YOU'LL NOTICE ... THE CHAIR AND NEWSPAPER HAVE CAUGHT FIRE!



THAT'S BECAUSE I'VE MADE THEM REACH KINDLING TEMPERATURE! I'M ABOUT TO MAKE THAT HAPPEN TO YOU, DOCTOR!

YOU'RE A HIGHLY UNSTABLE LAD, HERMAN! IN A MAN, IT MAY BE CURABLE... IN A SUPERMAN ... IT'S UNFORGIVEABLE!



POOR LAD! HE WAS QUITE STARTLED WHEN I ACTED! HE'D NEVER BEEN IN LIMBO BEFORE!

WHAT HAPPENED?  
WHERE ARE WE?  
IF THIS IS A TRICK...



THIS IS A REPORT WITHOUT COMMENT ON ONE OF THE ODDEST OCCURRENCES IN BRITISH RECORDS.

THOUGH THE MATTER HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF A NUMBER OF INVESTIGATIONS, NO EXPLANATION HAS EVER BEEN MADE FOR THE UNCANNY ANTICS AT THE ...

# BARBADOS BURIAL VAULT



IN THE YEAR 1807, THE FIRST COFFIN WAS PLACED IN THE SMALL BURIAL VAULT AT BARBADOS. IN 1812 IT RECEIVED SEVERAL MORE COFFINS. LATE IN THE SAME YEAR ONE VAULT WAS ONCE MORE OPENED TO REVEAL A GHASTLY SIGHT.

GREAT SCOTT... LOOK...  
LOOK AT THE COFFINS

WHY, THEY'VE BEEN SCATTERED ABOUT... IN ALL CONFUSION... AS IF BY SOME DARK POWER...

NONSENSE... IT MUST BE THE WORK OF RASCALLY MORTALS... IT HAS TO BE... WE SHALL PUT THEM IN ORDER AGAIN.

THAT IS A TASK FOR MORE THAN THE LIKES OF US. WE MUST HAVE HELP.

THE CUMBERSOME LEAD LINED COFFINS WERE STRAIGHTENED OUT AND THE VAULT CLOSED WITH A STONE SLAB WHICH REQUIRED AT LEAST SIX MEN TO MOVE. BUT, EVEN THIS DID NOT REMEDY THE SITUATION.

THIS IS THE THIRD TIME WE HAVE OPENED THE VAULT TO FIND THE SAME CONFUSION - NO EARTHLY PERSON HAS ENTERED THAT TOMB, I AM AT LOSS FOR AN EXPLANATION.

I WILL NOT ENTER THAT PLACE OF DARKNESS AGAIN... I AM A RATIONAL MAN WHO WILL LIVE ONLY IN THE WORLD OF SUNLIGHT.

THE MATTER HAD BECOME A SUBJECT OF MUCH DISCUSSION TO THE PRESS OF THE WORLD. FINALLY, LORD COMBERMERE, GOVERNOR OF BARBADOS, DECIDED TO SEE FOR HIMSELF WHAT WAS GOING ON!

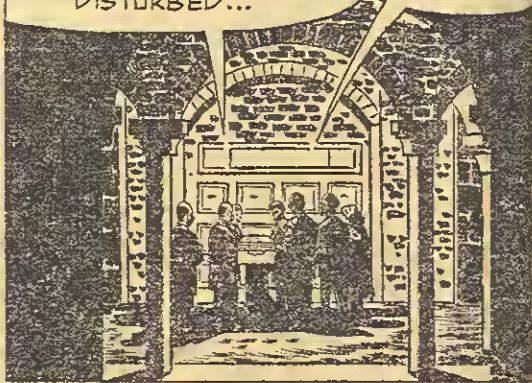
ON JULY 17, 1819, THE BODY OF ONE THOMAS CLARKE WAS PLACED IN THE VAULT BEFORE THE SCRUTINIZING EYE OF THE GOVERNOR!

WHAT COURSE SHALL WE TAKE, YOUR LORDSHIP? THERE IS ANOTHER FUNERAL SCHEDULED AT THE VAULT!

PEOPLE HAVE A RIGHT TO PEACEFUL SLEEP IN BRITISH GROUND! I SHALL PERSONALLY SUPERVISE THIS FUNERAL!

HE IS LAID TO REST, POOR SOUL! BUT, WHAT GUARANTEE DO WE HAVE, THAT THE CORPSE WILL NOT BE DISTURBED...

THIS TIME WE WILL MAKE SURE...



I ORDER THE WALLS OF THE VAULT SOUNDED... THE FLOOR COVERED WITH SAND... AND THE OPENING SEALED! A GUARD WILL BE ON CONSTANT DUTY BEFORE THE SEALED ENTRANCE!



ON APRIL 18, 1820, THE VAULT WAS AGAIN OPENED! THIS TIME LORD COMBERMERE WAS PRESENT. WITNESS THE EVENT!

WHAT DO YOU FIND HERE? LOOK FOR YOURSELF, YOUR LORDSHIP...



AGAIN... IT HAS HAPPENED AGAIN!

IT HAS HAPPENED AGAIN! YET, THE SEAL HAD NOT BEEN BROKEN... AND THERE ARE NO FOOTMARKS IN THE SAND!



THE GOVERNOR HAD SEEN ENOUGH! THE VAULT WAS EMPTIED AND THE COFFINS REMOVED TO MORE SUITABLE BURIAL GROUNDS!

I HEREBY DEEM THIS PLACE UNSUITABLE FOR ETERNAL REST!



THESE ARE THE PLAIN UNVARNISHED FACTS OF THE BARBADOS BURIAL GROUNDS! HOW DO YOU

EXPLAIN IT? WAS IT THE INSIDIOUS PLOTTINGS OF SOME EVIL POWER? ...OR MERELY THE PLAYFUL ANTICS OF... AN ADVENTUROUS SOUL!

END

# THE ONLY JOB

THE tall blonde girl stood at the curb looking up at the large black numbers above a narrow door. But it still looked dark and gloomy.

The newspaper folded under the girl's arm was frayed from too much fingerling. Her dream was smudged and streaked with the city's dirt and smoke. The once bright dash of flowers on her limp hat hung dirty and dejected. Her stockings had runs that went from the hem of her dress down to her scuffed, run over shoes.

She glanced up once again at the numbers with red tear stained eyes. She knew the answer would be as before, "No work today, come back tomorrow," but she had to keep trying. She knew she couldn't go on sleeping in railroad stations, dodging the police, begging food. But she could not move from the spot where she stood. "I feel strange," she thought vaguely. "I can't seem to move my feet and even tears won't come."

Just then a black limousine came to a quick halt at the curb behind her. She did not turn, but she heard the door open and then a man's voice.

"I'm from Mrs. Jensen, are you the girl I'm to pick up at the employment agency?"

"A job!" She mumbled to herself. "It could be a job, if it isn't it doesn't matter—it doesn't matter at all. I've got to eat, and I'm so tired!"

As she turned a tall man in a black uniform opened the rear door for her and gave her a kind smile. He said, "Get in, Mrs. Jensen is waiting to see you!"

She stepped into the back seat and felt her body sink deeply into the soft cushions as the powerful motor started up. She relaxed and closed her red, tired eyes. Some time later she felt the car stop and the man's voice said, "Here we are, I'll take you right up to her."

The girl still felt that odd sensation that had held her glued to the sidewalk. It was almost as if she were in a dream or pleasant coma. She followed the man around the large white stucco house and into a huge kitchen, a hallway, a large room, hallways and rooms and up a flight of



carved stairs; then they stopped in front of a door. The man raised his fist to knock, but his hand froze in mid air. Then he turned and looked at her. His eyes went from her frayed hat to her unpolished shoes. He smiled again and said, "No, I don't think she'll hire you, lookin' like that. Come with me, little girl!"

She followed him like a faithful dog, back down the stairs, and through the house, across the driveway and into a small cottage beside the large garages.

Here she met a dark woman, neatly dressed in

a black uniform with white apron. The man said, "Honey, this kid needs the job had, but the old lady won't hire her lookin' like this. Fix her up with some clothes; will you?"

The dark woman said, "Sure. Come in the bedroom, baby, I'll get you some clean things."

While she was putting on the clean clothing, the man brought in a large beef sandwich and a tall glass of milk. The food loosened her tongue and she spoke for the first time. When she got started she couldn't stop. She told them how she had lost her job, and how she had been looking, and had slept, and gone without food. And she told them that she was very frightened.

Then the man led her back into the large house and up again to the door where they had stooped the first time. This time he knocked softly and they stepped into a huge bed room, beautifully done with light, bright colors. It was a cheerful room. On the wide bed lay a very old woman. Her hair was white against the pink silk sheets, and her body under the bed covering was small and withered.

She smiled as the girl stood beside her bed. The old woman's eyes sparkled and her smile was radiant. Her voice was clear and slow, yet soft and very kind. She said, "What is your name?"

"Evelyn Gram," stated the girl, simply.

"Can you read?" asked the woman.

"Yes!" Evelyn said.

"Sit—sit beside my bed and read to me. I like you, my dear, but try to be a little more cheerful!"

The man winked at Evelyn quickly and went silently out of the room. As the door closed on the two, the old woman gave a long hard gasp and her body went suddenly limp. She was dead.

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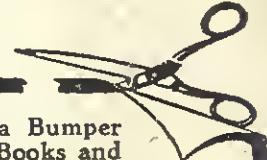
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